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The Dragon's Savior



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Chapter 1 by Maria Agustina

This is a fairy tale. Yet, not like the most of them.

Yes, it involves a beautiful princess, a big dragon, a brave knight and a high tower.

Only that it's not the princess who is being held prisoner by the dragon, but the other way around.

This is the story of how the knight in the shining armour, saved the dragon.

And it begins like this.

Chapter 2 by Phantim



There was once a King who was rich and powerful, few could rival his splendor. He was married to a loving queen and had two twin children, his son was called Arturus and his daughter Ayana. When it was their 5th birthday he told them he would get them anything they wanted. Even half the kingdom each if they wanted. However, they were children and did not crave such things as kingdoms.

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"Of course my children! You shall have what you desire. Now come give your father a hug! Happy Birthday!" The king said joyfully.

So the next day the king ordered his men to retrieve both things. He sent a knight to retrieve Sir Jarrin's blade, and a dozen knights to retrieve a dragon egg for his daughter.

Chapter 3 by Laura Frost



The brave knight rode from the palace to retrieve the legendary blade. He followed the path laid out in legend. After seven days and seven nights traveling, the knight came to a castle, perched high atop a mountain. It was the Castle of Sir Jarrin.

The knight rode up to the castle gates, and they opened for him. After saddling his horse, he began to search the castle. Soon, he found the throne room. Sitting upon the old stone throne was Sir Jarrin himself. Or rather, his ghost.

"Mighty Sir Jarrin!" Called out the knight. "I have come to retrieve your sword for my Prince."

Sir Jarrin raised his head, his gray, ghostly figure barely distinguishable from the throne.

"Another one? What makes you worthy of my sword, traveler? Why should I not turn you away like all the other seekers?"

"I know I am not worthy," said the knight. "I do not want your blade for me, but for my prince. He is of pure heart, true and kind. Even at his young age, my prince shows that he will grow to be as wise and good as you. He is a worthy holder of your sword, Sir Jarren."

The ghost stood. "You speak well, and truthfully. You may take my sword too your prince."

Soon, the knight brought the Sword of Sir Jarren before the King. The prince was overjoyed, and the King rewarded the knight for bringing such happiness to his son.

The squad of knights searched far and wide, looking for the princess's desired dragon egg. Among them rode a lowly servant boy, tasked with the care of the knight's horses.

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During the months of travel, the knight met many villagers who the knights dismissed. They told legends of a dragon's cave, and of a dragon's cave. When the party grew too large, the knight decided to leave them behind. The knight was sleeping, and the dragon was nearby.

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The journey through the dangerous mountain paths was long, and by the time the lowly servant boy had reached the entrance to the dragon's cave, the sun was rising, spreading light across the mountains. The servant boy ventured into the cave, and soon, came across the dragon. Behind the giant creature, the servant boy could make out the round shape of eggs.

"HUMAN, WHY HAVE YOU COME TO THIS PLACE?" The servant boy winced at the booming voice of the dragon, but stood firm.

"I come to seek one of your eggs, mighty dragon."

"ONE OF MY EGGS? YOU ARE TRULY A FOOL. WHY WOULD I EVER GIVE THEM UP?"

"So that they could have a glorious life, great dragon. The princess of my land has asked this boon from you. She is more beautiful than any other.

"WHAT DO I CARE OF HUMAN BEAUTY? SPEAK, BEFORE I DECIDE TO BURN YOU UP."

The servant boy began to sweat, but he did not move. "She hides intelligence and cunning behind her face. She is wise beyond words, and truly just. She loves her people, yet does not let emotion guide her. The princess wishes to have someone to love. A strong creature, to protect her. A wise creature, to guide her. A good creature, to be her lifetime friend. She wishes for a dragon, to love and protect, and to be loved and protected in turn."

"YOU SPEAK WELL, HUMAN, BUT I AM NOT CONVINCED."

The servant boy was prepared for this. "Most people look upon dragons as monsters. With the princess, your child would be loved and revered by all. No one would hunt it for sport. It would never go hungry, and be cared for by the princess for all of eternity.

The dragon stared down at the servant boy, and then slowly moved to the side, revealing the nest of dragon eggs.

"TAKE BUT ONE HUMAN, THEN LEAVE."

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The eggs shifted color, rippling as if alive. The servant boy chose one that shifted between deep greens, purples, and

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Some time later, the servant boy discovered the knights had left without him. However, the clever servant boy had hidden away a horse and supplies. A week later, he reached the palace and was brought before the King. There, he presented the dragon egg.

The princess had never before been seen so happy. She embraced the servant boy, and took the egg. It pulsed under her fingers, and was pleasantly warm against her chest.

For making the princess so happy, the king rewarded the servant boy. He was given a place at court, and soon became a friend to both the prince and princess. They grew, happy and content with their lives and friendship.

Chapter 4 by Laura Frost



Alyana ran down the halls of the castle, side by side with a dragon just small enough to fit through the doors of the palace. Servants and nobles alike hurriedly escaped their path, leaving chaos in the wake of the princess and the dragon.

They burst through a door and into a small courtyard.

"Yes!" Alyana jumped, pumping her fist in the air. "I win this round, Azure."

Azure playfully jumped on Alyana and sent them both tumbling to the ground. They laughed, and lay there staring up at the sky.

"Hey sis." Alyana smiled and sat up to see her brother and Alex. "We're going for a ride, want to come?"

"Sounds like fun. She stood up and brushed off her skirt. "Azure could probably use the exercise, isn't that right?" She ran her hands down Azure's scaly pelt, scratching in the dragon's favorite places.

The group walked side by side towards the stables. "So princess. Arturus says he's going to ask his father to let him be a knight for his birthday. Any ideas about your present?"

Alyana had ideas. Many ideas. But she wasn't ready to share them yet. "No, not yet."

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"You'll have to think big to top last year's. A seat on the royal council was a pretty shocking request. You'd probably have to ask to be the heir apparent instead of me to top that one."

"It would be quite shocking," Alyana smiled

Alex stared at Alyana, reading her face like no one else could. 'She's going to do it, isn't she. She wants to be Queen. Arturus is not going to like that.'

He brushed off his worries and continued towards the stables. Still, a nagging worry stayed in the back of his mind. He felt it, even if he didn't want to.

Trouble was coming, and it was going to be because of Alyana.

Chapter 5 by Laura Frost



Alyana and Arturus stood side by side in front of their father. Alex remembered his first week as a page, standing just out of sight as his lord knight danced and drank with the rest of the court. He no longer had to stay out of sight, but the glamour and riches of the court unnerved him.

The king looked far different from the first time Alex had seen him. The most notable difference was the empty throne beside him, the throne that once held Queen Avaria.

She had been alive when he first came to court. He remembered how the king, Alyana, and Arturus had wandered the palace as if in a dream like state, half awake and half asleep. Alex had been the one to bring Alyana out of her daze by telling her stories of his mother, and how she had died. In turn, Alyana brought the King and her brother back to themselves.

Alex could see nothing of the grief-stricken girl in Alyana's face. There was only determination.

"My children. Today is the day of your eighteenth birthday. Today, you are adults. You have grown so well." All of the court dabbed away tears as the king grew misty eyed. Alex had seen them hiding onions and droplets of water but an hour before. "My children. It brings me no greater joy than to ask: what do you want for your birthday?"

In the years before, Arturus had been a squire, and to be a squire to the most famed knight in the realm was a great honor.

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"Father, I wish to be a full-blown knight of the realm. I ask for adventure, to see new sights and to do good deeds. Will you grant me this?"

"Of course, my son." The king rose, and embraced his son. The court clapped. Alex hid his disgust at their fake emotion.

Alyana had chosen quite differently. She had asked for lessons in magic, politics, mathematics, science, and many other fields. The year before last she had asked for women to be given the same rights as men, a request that shocked the entire land. The seat on the royal council was an even bigger shock.

"Father, I wish..." She trailed off, and uncertainty flashed across her face. It was quickly replaced with determination, and her will of steel shone through her eyes.

"I wish to be Queen."

Chapter 6 by Nemi Dork



"My dear child. My Alyana. Know this, you have made such wise decisions. You have learned the arts of statecraft and diplomacy, to be a leader of the state. While your brother has learned the craft of the army, which protects the state, and has learned of the people who make up the state. Both of you are far beyond your years in your chosen place. Know that I ever and always wish for your happiness; but I cannot take from one to give to the other. To diminish one of you would be to degrade you both."

The king stood, his arms raised, "Know this, my people! My love for my children knows no bounds. They do not dwell equally within my heart, for each of them is one half of mine! But, my heart beats for my kingdom, for honor, and for duty."

And the people roared their delight.

"As each of my children possesses the wisdom of one half of the most ideal monarch, I shall

announce what I have always intended from the time of their fifth birthday! When my reign is at an end, the kingdom shall be split in two, one King, and One Queen!"

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Chapter 7 by Nemi Dork

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Alyana clenched her fists together, digging pale crescents into her palms.

She smiled, beatifically, at her father, at her people.

"Thank you Daddy," she said with joy in her voice and fire in her eyes. "I am so glad," she said loudly enough to be heard, "that my will aligns so well with your plans, that our thoughts are as one for our land, for our people!"

The party continued, she made her hands unclench when she had to eat. She made her hands unclench when she had to dance.

She danced well, and picked her partners better, smiling for old men and young dukes. Her voice did not shake with rage when she asked about their politics, about their dreams and hopes for the country.

The waring ones would have to go, they'd be too inclined to follow Arturus.

At the end of the night her hands clenched. At the end of the night Azure licked her hands, it hurt. She pushed the dragon away, smearing blood on her snout. Alyana tsck, "Ugh, look at what you did," she said, pleased to be distracted from her rage for a moment.

Her right hand was bloody, and she opened it, staring at a line of--

--a line of crescent *teethmarks*, obviously. They were beaded with blood.

She went to her wash basin, gesturing the porcilen bowl full of water with her left hand. She cleaned her right hand carefully, and the long lacy sleeve of her dress. "Azure, up, clean yourself up," she commanded, going back to her bed.

Both hands free she wove a quick little spell to undo the damage on her hand, humming a litany of helpful words.

She needed to plan. Oh, she was already riding on a trained horse, weaving politics around her; she'd not fall off a cliff. But that was not the same as a plan.

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The idea to kill her brother did not either. Though, his death did occur to her, in much the same way her father's did. People died. Arturus might die on his own, going on his adventures. He'd be happy that way, with a tale to live down the ages.

Of course, she thought, Arturus couldn't well have that tale if he was busy being a monarch. Oh no.

She needed to make him not want his half of the kingdom, then it could all be united under her.

Chapter 8 by Nemi Dork



"What my brother needs...are threats to fight, now how to do that?"

She turned to her books and she turned to her histories. She remembered wizards had raised up armies before, had cast great spells, and done such horrors.

She didn't want to do that. She might get caught! Nor, did he on further thought, want to actually damage the kingdom--that would be like ruining her favorite dress on purpose.

She found her answer in her Shining East histories.

The Sown Men of Qadm Kekasm.

There were spells to bring men under your sway, but they took much power, for all of a person's will and experience would bend against such pressure. Nor could anyone cast such spells on the young, for who had the power to keep the spell up for so long?

It was also evil, as well.

But none of that applied to the Sown Men.

They sprung up out of the ground in the space of a day, fully armed and armored man-like warriors. Golems, not people. They could be held in thrall for a time, and then they'd never think of disobeying.

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And to make them, all it took was a few swords and a dragon's flesh.

"Azure, come here."

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